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aside, when they are brought to the table. They who raise potatoes for market are less careful in this respect, and look more to the quantity in the scale or the bushel. Farmers sometimes allege that they must necessarily be late in the potatoe culture by reason of their other spring labour not being completed; but probably the procrastination may often be attributed to the wish to procure an increased quantity.

If such a practice of increasing the quantity at the expense of the quality were weighed in the scales of *conscience*, it would be found not to stand the test. Thus every proper motive of sound policy, and of honesty, and humanity, is in favour of early setting. I mean by early setting, potatoes planted through the month of April, but farthest not to exceed the middle of May. K.

To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine.

THE REMONSTRANCE.

A FREE People, possessed of reason and feeling, will complain of public grievances, so long as they are continued; and will pursue prudent and legal means of redress. Nor should they, on this account, be branded with the opprobrious epithet of disaffected, or stigmatized as incendiaries. Those who sincerely endeavour to destroy corruption and promote reformation amongst men, are the friends of good order and well established government, and such only as truly deserve to be accounted loyal. They are the pillars of states. It is their zeal to increase and perpetuate the power and prosperity of that realm, of which they form a part, that urges them to wield their tongues and pens in combating mal-administration, and struggling for the extermination of corruption.

Since the days of William the third, penal statutes have been represented as an infringement on the natural rights of a large portion of the population of the British empire. Since the incorporation of churches and states, and the civil establishment of religion, tithes, either in their principle, or in their mode of exaction, have been depicted as national evils. On these hackneyed topics little now remains to be said.

So long as tithes bear unequally upon the community, where no species of equivalent is received for them; while their quantum is considered to be at the disposal of unfeeling proctors, and ever variable and augmenting in proportion to increased industry, so as to be a heavy *embargo* on so important an object as agriculture; so long as they harrow the feelings of those who are yearly goaded to a conscious sensibility of the evils attending upon the corrupt mode of their imposition and collection, they will ever be a bone of contention between the tithe-farmer and the peasant, the seeds of alienation of affection, between the laity and the clergy, a stumbling block in the way of the progress of religion, and a temptation to disaffection in the subject to his ruler.

As to Catholic claims, reason and justice demand, that all those who live quiet and peaceable lives, who are amenable to the laws, and support the state in person and property, should have an equal and common share in whatever civil privileges their situation and circumstances require. The truth and force of this proposition may be granted, and yet the continuance of disabilities deemed expedient as a measure of policy. That policy, however, which is incompatible with equity and reason, is ignoble, dangerous and immoral. The welfare or security of a state, cannot be supposed to involve in it the destruction of natural rights. Nor can reasons of state supersede the law of equity. A right is not fairly withheld upon the surmise of the claimant's future abuse of it. A wholesome law deprives no man of privileges, until by his misconduct he has forfeited them. Fears may be entertained of promoting Catholic subjects to high and important stations and trusts in the legislative and executive departments of the state; but why entertained respecting them and not others, or more than others, is not easy to imagine! Men of different and opposite sentiments in the theory of religion will be found to have natural principles of honour, integrity, and faithfulness, and also to want all these. Subjects of the best and the worst states, who have made

the most plausible pretensions to loyalty and patriotism, members of the purest and most corrupt churches, who have made the most ostentatious parade of sanctity, have, on the day of trial proved traitors and villains. Men of all religious persuasions are naturally alike, and possess what, perhaps, we might call instinctive principles of honesty or deception, of cowardice or bravery. While we are far from the partial advocates for Catholicism, it may be asserted as a fact of unquestionable notoriety, that in the modern annals of the British empire, Protestant commanders, appointed to chief places of trust, have betrayed the momentous causes committed to them, through pusillanimity or corruption, and have been virtually or literally cashiered; while multitudes of Catholics, in different quarters of the world, have, with the heroism of free-born Irishmen, and Britons, fought, bled, and died for their king and their country.

The argument contained in the above reasoning is not invalidated by granting, that the history of other times may furnish ground for reversing the above assertion. There were times when religion, or rather bigotry and persecution entered into the politics of nations. Whoever then were in power, the advocates for this or that creed, lorded over the rights and conscience of those who differed from them in opinion. But those times have passed away, and the persecuting tenets and practices which then existed, should also be allowed to die; not to give place to infidelity and libertinism, to disaffection or republican phrenzy, under the specious names of liberal sentiments and natural rights: but that religion and liberty, proper so called, comprehending, "Peace on earth, and good will towards men," including, "righteousness, peace and joy," might for ever reign. The afflictions issuing from penal laws, have partly disappeared; liberties and privileges have been partially granted, and no alarming evils have ensued. Why then dread the consequences of perfecting that, which in its progress hath been hitherto productive of general good and of no mischief.

In the mean time, the assumption of a dictatorial air, language inflammatory to the people, or menacing to "the powers that be," ill suit the character of Petitioners, and so far as such appear, go to prove them unripe for a full redress. No exaggerated or heightened picture of slavery and woe should be drawn, as if the Catholics of the united kingdom were groaning under the galling shackles of bondage, or pining in misery; or, as if those rulers were tyrannical, who would not, in a day, gratify all their wishes. The great body of that people, in their cottages, live as others, enjoying the food and the raiment of their native soil, sensible of few national evils, but such as are common to them and their neighbours, knowing little and caring little about memorials to Parliament, on the important question of Catholic emancipation. In this situation, however, their remaining disabilities and grievances, should not the less powerfully plead for them.

Whatever tends to damp the spirit of the farmer, to keep him in a state of venal dependance and crouching vassalage, materially injures the commonwealth. Of such tendency are the present customary practices of too many gentlemen, who possess the landed property of the country. Lands are rented at a very high rate. Their price is calculated not from their intrinsic or present value; but from what commerce and improving manufactures may possibly be able one day to effect; from speculations upon the future increasing population of the country, and probable advance in the price of lands, founded upon the experience of late years, short leases, or none are given. The tenant is jealous of expending what little property he possesses in any radical or valuable improvements upon a precarious tenure. The high rent yearly drains from him that little capital which he has scraped together by daily toil, and deprives him of the means of manuring and cultivating his farm, so as to turn it to the best advantage for his own and the public good.

Men of great fortune seldom reside amongst their tenantry; when they do, they live at a lordly distance from them, know little of their wants and difficulties, the toils and privations to which they must patiently submit, to support

rising families, and furnish the stipulated rent at the appointed term. Stipulated by exorbitant demands and absolute conditions on the part of the lessor, and constrained acceptance and engagement on the part of the lesee. We say constrained, because such is the effectual check given to emigration, the difficulty of removing families from place to place; such the rapidly increasing population, the necessity of an additional habitation to every new family, such the number of bidders, who cannot conveniently take a stone for a pillow, or the canopy of heaven for a covering, that landlords may, in the disposal of their lands, clog them with what mulcts, covenants, and forfeitures they please, in addition to whatever rent the pride of unlimited affluence, and the love of money may prescribe. The ancient custom in the letting of land, of tendering to the owners an acreable value, is reduced to a farce. The whole construction and completion of the stipulation is in the power and at the mercy of the lords of the soil. These not unfrequently commit the sole management of their estates to hireling agents, under certain restrictions, who domineer among the people with all the tyranny of an eastern despot. To rents and permits, to changes and uncertainties therein, exclusive of just rents, land-holders are oft subjected from year to year, in obtaining the necessary and comfortable accommodations of fuel. Planting is an improvement of singular benefit to the nation, and what in time would prove one of the country's finest ornaments. Clumps of trees, skirting the hills and the vales, assist in forming the beautiful landscape, and shelter the crops and mansion of the farmer from the piercing and destructive blast. Timber is an essential requisite of architecture and husbandry, two of the chief sources of the wealth of nations, the employments and characteristic features of civilized society. But where strict prohibitions and severe penalties prevent men from using, for the needful purposes of building and agriculture, even a twig of timber, the produce of their own farms, and fruit of their own labour, there planting will be effectually prevented, and all its ornamental and beneficial consequences for ever lost to posterity. To all the great, the above observations do not apply. Let those, to whom they do, be humbly entreated to descend from the pinnacle of their grandeur, and deign to cultivate an acquaintance with the peasantry, who are seated far below them, to ameliorate their condition. When they view their homely fare and russet raiment, the very humble structure and plain furniture of their cabins, the glimmering taper and scanty ingle, which afford them light and warmth, the labour and fatigues, the inclemency of the seasons, the crosses, to which they are exposed, in drudging early and late through the deluging rains and pitiless storms of winter, or sweating under the scorching beams of the summer sun; while they are struggling to answer the landlord's demands, and preserve their little flocks from the merciless cudgel of the bailiff, or the miseries of a pound. A small diminution in the expense of fashionable amusements, of costly apparel and sumptuous tables, of horses and dogs, of livery servants and splendid equipage, would make a great amendment upon the wordly circumstances and comforts of a straitened tenantry. The cost of one grand dinner would raise a townland from indigence to wealth; the superfluous decorations for attending the theatre, or the court levee, would comfortably clothe a thousand naked children; the price of a single diamond would enrich a parish; the prodigal expenditure of one night in the jovial club, or at the gambling board, would place the tenants of an estate in easy circumstances. But suppose it is not ambition or prodigality, but avarice, that induces the 'squire or the lord to increase his rental more than he ought; how cruel would it be to sacrifice the comforts of thousands to gratify the cravings of one sordid appetite? But here, though much might be said, it is vain to descant. All the embarrassments of man, nay, all the aggregate mass of human woes, could they be painted in the most striking colours, would plead, with feeble force, against the "love of money, which is the root of all evil."

In the nature of things, and for the well-being of society there must be

superiors and inferiors, high and low, yet they merit not the name of levellers, who would argue for the equality of all men in some things. No man, however low, should he trampled upon, or his spirit wounded. The generous superior, will not grate the feelings of such, or sadden his soul by repeatedly impressing him with a sense of his power over him, or exercising it to his injury. It is the duty and honour of the great to endeavour to make men in low stations sit as light and easy as possible. The lower orders of society are the foundation upon which the higher are built. To disturb the foundation is to procure the ruin of the building.

If nature recoils against being driven, let it be led and allured. Harsh measures, continued or increased, will naturally make deeper impressions upon the suffering soul, and procure more embittered complainings, and might endanger the peace and stability of the empire, should they ever approximate to that oppression which makes a wise man mad.

Would superiors, by mildness and moderation, by reformation of abuses, by the pure administration of our glorious constitution, secure the affections of the multitude, and promote union and love among t all ranks, they would establish a more effectual barrier against the encroachments of tyrants, and the desolating power of French usurpation, than even the wooden walls of old England, or the insular situation of the British dominions. S. E.

Ballinahinch.

To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine.

SIR,

THE avowed intention of your useful miscellany being the improvement of the minds and morals of your countrymen, I beg leave through its medium to call the attention of your Readers to a subject which demands their most serious consideration.

At this time of dearth of provisions, and want of employment for the working people, the private distillation of whiskey, is carried on to such an extent as to be truly alarming to every real friend to Ireland.

I am extremely sorry, that the subject has escaped the notice of those who are much abler to discuss it than I am—but I hope from a few hints I shall throw out, some more competent hand may be induced to take it up; and I entertain no doubt, but that when the practice is shown in its true colours it will then appear to be fraught with so many evils to the community, that every rational man will lend his assistance for the suppression of a trade as injurious to the real interests, as it is destructive to the morals, of a large share of the population of the country.

The illicit distiller, that he may conciliate his neighbours, and purchase their connivance and secrecy, is obliged to treat them most profusely with his whiskey; and he hands it about amongst them, with a liberality which procures for him the character of an honest-hearted, worthy fellow, with whom there is no harm, but that he is striving to make a livelihood by humbugging the guager, who is allowed to be one of society's greatest pests. By this means a system of drunkenness and debauchery, is introduced among the farmers, who when doing their duty are the most useful class of men in society.

Unhappily it is too much the disposition of those men to suppose there can be no harm in getting drunk, provided they spend no money; never once reflecting, that the expense of spirits, is but a small part of the real injury sustained by the inordinate use of them: loss of time when drinking, rendering themselves incapable of business after it; loss of health, and the bad example to their children; these are serious injuries indeed, whether viewed in a physical or moral point.

The education of their children (this prime duty of man) is not only neglected, but they are so familiarized to scenes of riot and debauchery, as almost naturally, to fall into the same dissipated habits with their unhappy parents; they hear dreadful vengeance vowed against the guager, and his assistants, in their presence, the question is perhaps often discussed whether it is not highly praiseworthy to shoot a guager in defence of